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Death toll rises as Iranian protesters defy warning of a harsh crackdown

BY THOMAS ERDBRINK
New York Times

TEHRAN, IRAN

Ignoring pleas for calm from President Hassan Rouhani, Iranians protesters took to the streets in several cities for the fifth day Monday as pent-up economic and political frustrations boiled over in the broadest display of discontent in years.

The Iranian government responded with conciliatory words from Rouhani, but also a widening security clampdown – and a pledge late Monday to crack down even harder.

"We will not at all let insecure situation to continue in Tehran," Brig. Gen Esmaeil Kousari, deputy chief of the main Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps base in Tehran, told the semiofficial ISNA news agency. "If this situation continues, the officials will definitely make some decisions and at that point this business will be finished."

Despite Rouhani's diplomatic language, it was clear the demonstrators would be given no leeway.

The deputy interior minister, Hossein Zolfaghari, told the semiofficial Jamaran website, "From tonight the unrest will be controlled more seriously."

On Monday, a crackdown by

SEE IRAN PROTESTS, 2A

AP

A student attends a protest inside Tehran University on Saturday while a smoke grenade is thrown by anti-riot Iranian police in Tehran, Iran. The death toll from clashes has climbed to 12 since Thursday.

WORLD

NORTH KOREA DRIVING WEDGE

Kim Jong Un's surprise call on Monday for direct talks with South Korea could drive a wedge into the decades-old alliance between Seoul and Washington. **8A**

INSIGHT

ACCIDENTAL GUN DEATHS TUMBLE

Gun violence has received no shortage of attention. But one bright spot has gotten much less: accidental shooting deaths have steadily declined. **5A**

NATION

HARASSMENT ACTION PLAN

Hundreds of prominent Hollywood women form an initiative to fight systemic sexual harassment. **4A**

SPORTS

49ERS, RAIDERS WRAP UP YEAR

Goodwin honored as 49ers announce their team awards, while Raiders await word on new coach. **1C**

Capital crowds modest as legal marijuana sales start

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Danny Kress, right, helps customer Mike Shorrow of Elk Grove who was the first customer to buy cannabis at A Therapeutic Alternative on H Street as legal marijuana sales begin in Sacramento on Monday.

9 dispensaries in Sacramento have permits to sell recreational weed

BY BRAD BRANAN AND TONY BIZJAK
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Shortly after 9 a.m. on New Year's Day, Mike Shorrow, a 63-year-old medical marijuana patient from Montana, pulled out a $100 bill and bought 4½ grams of pot, making him the first customer at the first licensed retail cannabis shop in California's capital.

"That ate up that $100 fast," said Shorrow as he took his weed from Danny Kress, dispensary manager of A Therapeutic Alternative on H Street. While shocked at the price he paid for marijuana, Shorrow was thrilled to be one of the first to buy recreational weed legally in the state.

He led a line of about 20 people in front of A Therapeutic Alternative. Similar sized crowds waited outside other Sacramento dispensaries on Monday morning, the date voters enshrined as the start of retail cannabis sales when they approved Proposition 64 in November 2016. Nine dispensaries in Sacramento have the state and city permits needed to sell recreational weed.

Across the state, about 100 businesses have state sales permits. Future growth will be limited in some places because of local government bans.

Dispensary owners reported that customer lines were longer than usual, compared to when the industry could sell only to adults with recommendations from doctors. But some owners and customers expressed disappointment that more people didn't show up to celebrate legalization.

Dwayne and Sheila Wahl, visiting from Denver, recalled what happened in their home state of Colorado when it legalized retail marijuana sales on Jan. 1, 2014. There were lines around the block of the dispensaries and an excitement prevailed about a once-taboo plant becoming accepted by the government and the general public.

So when they showed up at Northstar Holistic Collective in Sacramento's River District, they were a bit disappointed by the lack of crowds. A handful of people sat in the dispensary's waiting room, and it took about 10 minutes for the Wahls to get hooked up with product – an eighth of an ounce of Zkittlez, which cost about $45.

"Where are all the people?" Dwayne Wahl said.

The city of Sacramento's pot czar, Joe Devlin, drove to seven dispensaries Monday morning and reported seeing "no real crowds."

"Maybe this isn't a big deal anymore?" he said.

Some dispensaries reported long lines on Sunday of customers making end-of-the-year medical purchases before new taxes kicked in. Devlin said those purchases contributed to the lack of turnout for Monday's legalization day. With legalization, the price of marijuana includes a new 15 percent state tax and any new city-specific taxes, which is 4 percent of gross receipts in Sacramento. Patients with a state-issued medical card get a waiver on the 8 percent sales tax.

Other parts of the state reported healthy crowds, including in San Diego and the Bay Area. Hundreds of people were

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